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RESUME OF DISCUSSIONS IN CLOTHING SECTION

WESTERN STATES EXTENSION CONFERENCE - AUGUST 9-11, 1939

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COMMENTATOR

To be called a commentator on this program assigns me a title I have never carried before. I am tempted to report the "human side of the news" from the clothing section of this conference. There is much that is human that could be reported from the clothing discussions. With the exception of food perhaps there is no interest of home and family which involves human relationship more than clothing the family. In these modern days clothing is one of the essentials of living for which a certain amount of money must go. It is obvious that the subject Clothing the Farm Family can take on real significance in any discussion by clothing extension specialists.

This conference of clothing specialists of the Western States and Hawaii is very timely for several reasons. This group of specialists had not been in conference for 12 years--since they met at Reno, Nev., in 1927. There has been almost a complete turn-over of specialists since that day, Miss Ethelwyn Dodson of California being the only specialist who has been continuously on duty since 1927. It is interesting to note the tenure of service of the group present, the average number of years being  $4\frac{1}{2}$ . Seven of the clothing specialists have been appointed within the past year; all but one, however, have had previous county home demonstration agent experience. Two of the twelve are part-time specialists in clothing. The exchange of ideas has been invaluable to the newly appointed specialists and most helpful to the others.

Another reason that this conference is most timely is that the present enrollment in clothing projects is the largest project enrollment in Home Demonstration Work and in the Girls' 4-H Clubs in the Western States. From all reports we can conclude that clothing is a project that we can be handled more easily by local leaders than some of the other projects. In 1938 there were 360 counties in the 11 Western States and the Territory of Hawaii served by county agricultural agents and 187 counties served by home demonstration agents. In 7 of the States a few of the agents serve more than one county. In 1938, 326 counties, practically all served by one or more agents, carried some phase of the clothing project. In at least 173 counties without home demonstration agents, local leaders were largely responsible for the work done, especially in the 4-H Clubs with girls. The following are a few 1938 results in the clothing project that can be listed statistically for the 11 Western States and the Territories of Alaska and Hawaii:







Demonstration meetings by agents or specialists, 4,619.  
Demonstration meetings by local leaders, 10,741.  
Number of girls enrolled in clubs, 31,519.  
Number of boys enrolled in clubs, 253.  
Number following instructions in construction: Adults,  
23,597; juniors, 20,051.  
Number following instructions in selection: Adults,  
21,427; juniors, 14,073.  
Number keeping clothing accounts: Adults, 3,716; juniors,  
9,973.  
Families following buying suggestions, 14,321.

All the questions for discussion as outlined in the program were submitted by the clothing specialists. The additional questions submitted were listed and mimeographed and were made available to those in attendance. By the questions suggested for discussion, it can be easily concluded that the clothing specialists are studying the job analytically and are alert to the great variety of situations and conditions to which the program and methods used must be adjusted to meet the needs effectively.

A few of the points that were emphasized in the discussions might be listed as follows:

1. In the appraisal of the clothing program given by each specialist with plans for the future the following factors and conclusions were dominant in the several appraisals.

- a. The clothing program is balanced by including the economic, aesthetic, health, and construction phases. Though all phases are important, the economic and construction phases which overlap are the ones receiving the most emphasis. While more instruction is given each year in the wise purchasing of ready-made clothing, the construction of clothing and all that this phase involves leads in the demand, especially with the girls in 4-H Club work. The health phases that are being increasingly emphasized are selection of shoes and hosiery, sensible clothing for children and infants, correct foundation garments, and good posture. Closely allied with construction is the study and appreciation of design, color, and line listed in the aesthetic list. Good grooming as presented to women and girls is not thought of as a frivolous vanity, but as a contribution to aesthetic satisfaction, health, poise, and self-confidence; therefore, instructions in good grooming can appropriately be included in the balanced clothing program.

- b. Farm women who make up the County Home Demonstration Council bring first-hand information as to the clothing needs of the farm families. Occasionally a questionnaire is sent out in advance of the County Program Planning Day which is featured by the Home Demonstration Council or by a County Program Planning







Committee. The specialists felt that every opportunity was being given to determine the program locally, but that it was necessary for extension specialists and agents to give advice sometimes in order for the Extension Service to meet the heavy demands with a limited personnel.

It goes without saying that any phase of a home demonstration program is adjustable at any time to meet emergencies such as reduced incomes due to depression, drought, and floods. California gave as an example, that in the flooded section 2 years ago, the clothing program was immediately rearranged to include subject-matter demonstration in the cleaning of clothing and household furnishings. Shrunken clothing was cleaned and remodeled and in many instances dyed.

c. The instruction given in the clothing project has a far-reaching influence on successful results in other home demonstration projects so that a close correlation between clothing, home furnishing, home management, child development, and health can be effected. The skills, fabric identification and selection, color theory and its application developed in the clothing project carry over into home furnishings and into crafts.

Cleaning, renovation, and storage of clothing are aspects of home management as well as the keeping of clothing accounts and making a clothing budget. Proper selection of shoes and clothing and posture have important relationship to efficient work and fatigue. Clothing, children, and emotions may be closely related, hence a consideration in parent education and child development. A good appearance may be attributed to three factors: Health, posture, and clothing.

2. Considerable discussion was given to 4-H Club work, and a few discussion notes are briefed as follows:

a. Should we strive for better quality or larger volume in 4-H Club work? There was a difference of opinion, but the greater number felt that a high quality of work brings more lasting results. Higher standards bring greater satisfaction to girls or adults and outstanding results solicit the attention and interest of a larger number and results in an increasing volume. The enrollment in clothing clubs should be in direct proportion to the trained leadership available. It was the consensus that local leaders should be carefully selected, and every effort should be put forth to give local leaders more training than many are receiving at present.

b. It was thought that special attention should be given in planning work for the 10- to 12-year-old group, and that the requirements should fit the mental and physical ability of the





of the child and not be too insistent on the child's fitting the requirements. Too much contest with this age group might be more harmful than beneficial.

3. All clothing specialists reported having visited in the homes of Farm Security clients. In every State some assistance had been given to training the Farm Security Home Supervisors in subject matter relating to thrift practices in clothing, construction, and remodeling, buying methods, clothing budgeting, and home-made rug making. Each State reported furnishing clothing circulars to Vocational Teachers and W.P.A. workers.

4. It is evident that illustrative material plays a big part in the clothing project. Some time was given to discussing ways and means of obtaining and preparing illustrative material for use by local leaders, especially in the counties without home demonstration agents.

The exhibits brought to the conference by several of the specialists were studied carefully by those in attendance. Clothing for the 4-H Club girl furnished by the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, was given close study. Some of the other most worth-while exhibits on display featured the following:

California - Infants' clothing, clothing for 4-H Club girls, and sensible shoes.

Wyoming - What to know in buying hosiery.

Montana - Use of wool in knitting and application of art in needlecraft.

Nevada - The clothes closet.

5. Appreciation was expressed in being favored with the splendid contributions of Miss Ruth O'Brien, In Charge, Textiles and Clothing Division, Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture. At the first general session Miss O'Brien presented "Research as a Background for Clothing Extension" and showed interesting samples of present-day fabrics, results of tests, etc. During the discussions Miss O'Brien brought us up to date on sources of consumers' educational material and other timely interests on which clothing specialists needed information.



